

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in this application and claims 1-3, 5-8 and 10-24 are subject to appeal. Independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 are amended, and dependent claims 21-24 are cancelled herein.

Each of Independent claim 1, 6, 11 and 16 is amended to add the limitations previously recited in its dependent claim 21, 22, 23 or 24, as applicable, to simplify the issues on appeal. Claims 21, 22, 23 and 24 are accordingly cancelled.

For reasons previously presented, it is believed that each of claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 are distinguishable over the applied prior art, and therefore it is respectfully submitted that this amendment should not be considered as having been made for purposes of patentability (i.e. for purposes of overcoming the prior art rejections presented in the final Official Action and maintained in the Examiner's Answer). However, as highlighted in the previously presented traversal arguments relating to claims 21, 22, 23 and 24, the added limitations do indeed further distinguish over the applied prior art and therefore will simplify the issues on appeal.

Claims 1 and 16 are also amended to correct obvious editorial errors. Thus, these corrections are merely for clarification and do not change the substance or scope of what was previously recited in claims 1 and 16.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is courteously solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the

below listed local telephone number, in order to expedite resolution of any remaining issues and further to expedite passage of the application to issue, if any further comments, questions or suggestions arise in connection with the application.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 1158.41555X00) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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